

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE Training Costs for Forensic Scientists

Salary

Because of uncompetitive salaries, the Forensic Science Division has had trouble recruiting qualified scientists. When the crime lab hires a new employee with only the minimum educational qualifications and trains them through a training assignment, it is expensive and time-consuming.

- It takes a full year of training before a Serologist/DNA scientist is qualified to do independent case work.
- Latent Print scientists require 18-month training assignments.
- Firearms specialists require 24-month training assignments.

Staff Trainer Salary

In all sections, training requires a supervisor or lead worker to dedicate a minimum of 25 percent of his or her time to training a new employee. This takes time away from that employee's case work.

Chemical Reagents

In the Serology/DNA section, the training requires running sample cases. This uses an entire DNA kit at a cost of approximately \$6,000. Other sections have chemical reagent expenses, but DNA kits are the most expensive.

Outside Training

The Forensic Science Division training manual recommends one-week, out-of-laboratory training assignments. For Serology/DNA training, the lab sends its staff to the California Criminalistics Institute. Other sections, including Latent Print and Firearms, require more than one week of specialized training outside of the lab.

Costs

Salary (including benefits and insurance)	\$64,986
Staff Trainer Salary (no benefits or insurance)	\$14,300
Chemical Reagents	\$6,000
Outside Training	<u>\$2,000</u>
Total Annual Training Costs	\$87,286